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HOUSE RESOLUTION 211

By Rinks

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend James R. Barham and Lawrence Heatherly for heroism and meritorious service during the Korean War.

WHEREAS, our country was conceived by individuals willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure this nation's freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to have so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, thousands of Tennesseans have continued this time-honored tradition of volunteerism through service in the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, James Barham and Lawrence Heatherly have served with courage and gallantry and deserve proper recognition for heroism both in the U.S. Army and in society today, a recognition not yet formally extended by the Army; and

WHEREAS, on June 25, 1950, forces of the communist North Korean regime created after the division of the Korean peninsula following War II, invaded the Republic of South Korea, precipitating a three-year war involving sixteen allied nations against North Korea and its Soviet and mainland Chinese allies; and

WHEREAS, the South Korean capital of Seoul fell after three days, but on September 14, 1950, United Nations forces commanded by General Douglas MacArthur landed at Inchon and recaptured Seoul twelve days later; and

WHEREAS, MacArthur's UN forces crossed the 38th parallel, took the North Korean capital of Pyongyang on October 19 and reached the banks of the Yalu river at the border of Manchuria on November 21, 1950; and

WHEREAS, some 300,000 North Korean and Chinese troops launched a counterattack, and drove the UN forces deep into the south, retaking Seoul on January 4, 1951; The UN forces, then under the command of U.S. General Matthew Ridgeway, were able to regroup, knock out the communist air forces and retake Seoul by mid-March of 1951; and

WHEREAS, in September, 1951, James R. Barham and Lawrence Heatherly were assigned to a heavy mortar company with the Ninth Infantry Regiment, Second Division, Eighth Army; their unit was stationed between Kumwha and Pyongyang on an elevation soon to be known as Heartbreak Ridge; and

WHEREAS, the strategic heights of Heartbreak Ridge had been captured after 37 days of intense trench warfare. Heatherly had already fought at Blood Ridge, was wounded at Kumwha village, and suffered wounds from mortar shrapnel on Heartbreak Ridge; Barham had survived the "May Massacre" when Chinese troops surprised the UN forces and drove them back eleven miles, suffering a wound in the left leg from a sniper's bullet; and

WHEREAS, the two men were treated by medics and returned to the fighting. While on guard duty Heatherly and Barham spotted a full platoon of North Korean troops advancing on them; undaunted by the unfavorable odds, the two men shouted the Korean word for "halt" and amazingly were able to secure the surrender of the entire platoon; and

WHEREAS, following the signing of the July 27, 1953, armistice agreement at Panmunjom, the three-year war that had claimed an estimated 1,540,000 North Korean and Chinese casualties; 344,227 UN casualties, including 25,604 U.S. dead and 103,492 wounded; and some two million North and South Korean civilians, was over; and

WHEREAS, because of the destruction of service records in a fire at a St. Louis, Missouri records company, Barham and Heatherly have never received any official recognition for their bravery in capturing a platoon of enemy soldiers or acknowledgment of their wounds. This lack of acknowledgment continues despite sworn statements filed by the two men and the promise of a statement by a squadmate of Heatherly, who witnessed his wound by shrapnel; and

WHEREAS, Barham and Heatherly served with great bravery and ability in the service of their country and the free world in the 9th Infantry Regiment, Second Division, Eighth Army; and

WHEREAS, Barham and Heatherly performed their duties with the utmost bravery, skill, dedication and professionalism; their service can only be categorized as outstanding; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That we hereby honor and commend James R. Barham from Adamsville and Lawrence Heatherly from Savannah for outstanding heroism and meritorious service in the United States Army during the Korean War and offer our heartfelt gratitude for a difficult and dangerous job well done.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copies.